Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/12/20 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000706090047-2

STAT

ARTICLE APPEARED ON PAGE A-36

NEW YORK TIMES
14 March 1986

Messenger Who Tried to Sell Secrets Gets 3 Years

By PHILIP SHENON
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 13 — A former Washington messenger who confessed he had tried to sell secret Government documents to the Soviet Union was sentenced today to three to nine years in Federal prison.

"I am not a spy," the former messenger for a transcription company, Randy M. Jeffries, said to Judge Gerhard A. Gesell before the sentence was announced in Federal District Court. "My intentions were not treacherous. They were out of desperation and stupidity."

Judge Gesell could have imposed a prison term of up to 10 years on Mr. Jeffries, who acknowledged in a plea bargain in January that he had offered to provide Soviet agents with a transcript of a secret Congressional hearing on military communications.

In exchange for his guilty plea to a charge of misusing classified documents, the Government agreed to drop the more serious charge of transmitting secret material to the Soviet Union, which would have carried a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Mr. Jeffries, 26 years old, said that he had tried to sell documents from the Acme Reporting Company, the Washington-based transcription concern that employed him, because he needed to pay for his heroin habit.

"I don't think I'm a bad person, but I am sorry," he said in a steady voice, showing no emotion.

Judge Gesell said: "I cannot accept the idea that the type of conduct of which you were involved can ever be excused on the basis of drugs. I think you need help, and I'm going to send you where you can get it."

An assistant United States attorney handling the case, Rhonda C. Fields, said that the Government was continuing an investigation of Acme and its managers. Federal officials have indicated that the company could face charges of handling classified material recklessly.

Judge Gesell assailed the United States Attorney's office, saying that Acme, which provided transcription services for the House Armed Services Committee, should have been prosecuted long ago. Acme still does transcription work for Congress, although no longer for the Armed Service Committee.

"Where is the Acme Reporting Company?" he asked angrily. "I don't see them before me. I don't understand a U.S. Attorney that doesn't do something about this."

'There's Your Witness'

He motioned to Mr. Jeffries and said: "There's your witness. He'll tell you what they did."

Federal officials have said that Acme discarded classified Government documents in the trash after tearing them by hand, a violation of Government rules that require the material be shredded or turned into pulp. Acme does not have branch offices in New York.

In a written statement released after the hearing, Joseph E. diGenova, the United States Attorney here, did not directly respond to Judge Gesell's criticism but said that the investigation of Acme was "extensive."

Acme officials did not return repeated telephone calls from a reporter seeking response.

Mr. Jeffries was arrested here Dec. 20 after offering to sell three classified documents for $5,000 to a Federal agent posing as a Soviet spy.

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/12/20 : CIA-RDP90-00965R000706090047-2